

County of Los Angeles  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES**

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Director



Board of Supervisors

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Fifth District

March 30, 2005

TO: Each Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryce Yokomizo', written over the 'TO:' line.

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: MOTION - SYN 12 (JUNE 15, 2004)  
REPORT ON FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES  
COUNTY**

This is to provide a final report on your Board's Motion of June 15, 2004 - Report on Food Insecurity and Hunger in Los Angeles County. In response to your Board's instruction based on the report, in July 2004, DPSS began a Food Stamp outreach project to decrease the risk of hunger in the Antelope Valley by increasing Food Stamp only participation for eligible families and adults by 35% by the end of February 2005. Based on the Board's instructions, the Antelope Valley Project experience is the basis for a Countywide outreach campaign which is described below and attached.

**ANTELOPE VALLEY OUTREACH PROJECT**

In my last report dated December 15, 2004, we reported that the Food Stamp Only caseload in the Lancaster District increased from 3,400 to 4,109 cases, or 21% since the inception of the project to the end of October 2004. By the end of February 2005, the Food Stamp only caseload increased to 4,609 cases. This represents a total increase of 36% during the outreach project, which met and exceeded our goal of 35%.

The following strategies were incorporated in our outreach efforts to increase Food Stamp participation in the Antelope Valley:

- The DPSS Lancaster District office deployed four Eligibility Workers (EWs) at 17 non-traditional sites to process Food Stamp applications. The sites included WIC offices, churches, senior centers, schools, health clinics, food pantries and the Social Security office.

- Lancaster District staff conducted outreach to families receiving Medi-Cal, but who were not receiving Food Stamp benefits, by telephoning each family at their yearly Medi-Cal redetermination to explain the Food Stamp Program and to encourage them to apply for benefits. Additionally, every family applying for Medi-Cal in the district office was also encouraged to apply for Food Stamp benefits.
- Food Stamp outreach flyers were distributed at one-time-only special events throughout the Antelope Valley. On August 21, 2004, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) distributed over 500 flyers at their Boxing Day Event held at the Jackie Robinson Park in Palmdale. DPSS continues to work with DPR, community-based organizations and government agencies to identify one-time-only outreach opportunities.
- On September 24 and 25, 2004, outreach events were conducted at three Vallarta Markets in the Antelope Valley. The events were publicized in the Daily News, the Antelope Valley Press and on a local television station. Over 380 potentially eligible families and individuals were pre-screened at the events.
- Over 20 community-based organizations continue to distribute Food Stamp outreach flyers on a regular basis at various locations and events throughout the Antelope Valley. Over the past several months, over 30,000 flyers have been distributed.
- In January 2005, DPSS submitted a grant request to the Quality and Productivity Commission for a grant to obtain a social marketing expert to assist DPSS in its food stamp outreach efforts. On February 28, 2005, the commission approved a \$50,000 grant. The social marketing expert will recommend media and outreach strategies and assist DPSS in developing marketing materials that will be most likely to reach our target population. DPSS is currently developing a solicitation document with a target date to hire a marketing expert by May 2005.

Based on our final evaluation of the Antelope Valley Outreach Project, the outreach efforts that were most effective in contributing to its success were the outstationing of EWs at non-traditional sites, outreach to families receiving or applying for Medi-Cal, and pre-scheduled/publicized outreach at grocery stores.

### **COUNTYWIDE FOOD STAMP OUTREACH CAMPAIGN**

In preparation for a Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign, in January and February 2005, DPSS Food Stamp Program staff convened meetings with representatives from the Antelope Valley Outreach Taskforce, Countywide Outreach Taskforce, and DPSS' Bureau of Workforce Services. The purpose of the meetings was to review data and strategies used in the Antelope Valley Outreach Project as a basis for implementing a Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign.

Each group made recommendations based on their review of the outcomes and agreed to use strategies that were successful in the Antelope Valley Outreach Project as the basis for a Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign to increase Food Stamp participation for all eligible families and adults. Attached is DPSS' campaign plan and strategies to begin this project. From April to June 2005, the campaign will be in the planning stages with implementation beginning in July 2005. Semi-annual reports will be prepared with the first report for July through December 2005, submitted to the Board in February 2006.

BY:jd

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

## **COUNTYWIDE FOOD STAMP OUTREACH CAMPAIGN**

This is a plan to conduct a Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign to increase Food Stamp participation for eligible families and individuals. Specifically, the campaign will focus on the following three overlapping target groups:

- Working poor;
- Senior citizens; and
- Legal immigrants

### **BACKGROUND**

DPSS has a long history of outreaching to prospective Food Stamp applicants in various non-traditional settings, including WIC offices, churches, senior centers, schools, health clinics and food pantries.

Misinformation regarding the Food Stamp Program eligibility requirements, immigration consequences, and program regulations is still common within communities. Over the last several years rules have been amended, both increasing and decreasing the availability of benefits. This has caused confusion and results in potentially eligible households and individuals not applying for Food Stamp benefits.

Outreach is critical to overcome these barriers. It provides current and correct information about the Food Stamp Program and gets households and individuals the benefits they need. Food Stamp outreach activities ensure that there is a flow of accurate information regarding program eligibility to potentially eligible households and individuals with a primary goal of increasing participation.

### **GOAL**

The goal of the Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign is to build on the success of the Antelope Valley Project to decrease the risk of hunger overall in Los Angeles County by increasing Food Stamp participation for eligible families, children and adults throughout the County.

To achieve these goals, the campaign will:

- Promote a positive perception about the Food Stamp Program;
- Identify barriers that impede participation;
- Take action to alleviate the existing barriers;
- Improve access to the Food Stamp Program by utilizing more creative ways to begin the application process;
- Enhance outreach material and activities, including the use of free media; and
- Enhance existing partnerships with community-based organizations and other agencies, and actively engage new community partners.

## **OUTREACH PLAN**

The outreach plan consists of the following seven components:

### **1. DPSS and CSS Emergency Food Distribution Sites**

To assist our Food Stamp outreach effort, the Board, on February 15, 2005, instructed DPSS to coordinate its Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign efforts with the Department of Community and Senior Services (CSS).

In partnership with CSS, DPSS will outstation Eligibility Workers (EWs) at specific times commencing May 2005 to take Food Stamp applications at CSS' 11 Emergency Food Distribution Sites. Nine DPSS District offices will be involved in this effort.

### **2. Community Partners**

Non-traditional sites will be recruited to partner in this outreach campaign. The level of involvement of each of these partners will vary. The activities will include outstationing of EWs on-site to provide Food Stamp information and presentations and take Food Stamp applications. Community partners may also assist in the distribution of flyers, displaying posters in high traffic areas and conducting prescreening events.

DPSS will maintain and post a master calendar on its website on the availability of EWs outstationed at non-traditional sites to take Food Stamp applications.

### **3. Medi-Cal Outreach**

Outreach will be conducted to families receiving Medi-Cal, but who do not receive Food Stamp benefits. LEADER programming will automate this process and send a flyer to families that are income eligible to Food Stamp benefits to encourage them to apply for benefits. Additionally, families applying for Medi-Cal in the district office will also be encouraged to apply for Food Stamp benefits.

### **4. Partnership with Retail Grocers**

DPSS will continue to develop partnerships with retail grocers, as with the Antelope Valley project, to conduct special Food Stamp pre-screening events at grocery stores. These events will be publicized in the various local newspapers. For those families participating in the pre-screening, this will begin the application process.

### **5. Food Stamp Outreach Flyers**

Food Stamp outreach flyers will be distributed at special events sponsored by other County departments, other government agencies, and community-based organizations, as in the Antelope Valley Project.

## **6. Media Campaign**

DPSS will also be developing a media campaign. The social marketing expert funded by the Quality and Productivity Commission will recommend outreach strategies and assist DPSS in developing a media campaign and marketing materials that will be most likely to reach our target population.

## **7. Model Districts Project**

Many of the recommendations noted in the Model Districts Project "Serving Up Solutions" report, will be incorporated into the design of the Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign to the extent possible. For example:

- Develop standardized anti-hunger training for district staff;
- Share/applaud innovative outreach ideas/practices in district offices;
- Set up Food Stamp tables to distribute marketing materials;
- Create Food Stamp buttons for Medi-Cal EWs; and
- Add colorful bulletin boards to include participant Food Stamp success stories.

## **STAFFING**

Effective July 2005, one EW in each District office will be dedicated to the Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign to conduct outreach activities at non-traditional sites. These sites include CSS Emergency Food Distribution sites, WIC offices, churches, senior centers, schools, health clinics, food pantries and the Social Security office. EWs selected for the campaign will be trained on both Food Stamp Program policy and outreach strategies. The funding for these EWs will come from the State allocation for food stamp eligibility administration.

## **TRACKING**

Data will be gathered and analyzed throughout the campaign to determine whether the overall goal of increasing participation in the Food Stamp Program is being met. An analysis of all data will be used to continue improving our outreach efforts in the future. The following data will be collected:

- Number of applications taken;
- Number of applications approved;
- Number of applications denied;
- Reasons for denials (will assist in identifying barriers and improving outreach efforts and outcomes); and
- Ongoing reviews of district Food Stamp caseloads to assess overall impact of outreach efforts.

## **EVALUATION**

Semi-annual reviews of the outreach campaign will evaluate the success, effectiveness, and impact of outreach activities based on caseload and application data. Staff will compare participation before and after the six-month period. A report of findings and recommendations will be prepared semi-annually. Both the Antelope Outreach Taskforce and the Countywide Outreach Taskforce will continue to assist in their partnership roles throughout this outreach effort.

## **COUNTYWIDE FOOD STAMP OUTREACH CAMPAIGN TIMELINE**

During April through June 2005, the campaign will be in the planning stages with full implementation to begin in July 2005.